

Better off as Friends

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Summary: There are some couples that just really don't work together, and even when Lucy knew Laxus wasn't right for her, she stuck with it for a little while because it was fun. And when it all comes crashing down, no one is happier than Bickslow, surprisingly.

Better off as Friends

_Okay... Okay. So, I was originally going to wait until I had the next chapter of How I Met You posted, but then I decided against it, because really, I thought it would be fun to post this now before I get Laxus in HIMY... hehe. _

There are things in here that haven't been brought up in HIMY yet, so I'm kinda spoiling my own stories, but whatever. I'm sure you'll all survive. There's also some things in here that have been hinted at in the story, but not a lot. This was really only written because I felt the need to explain more of the entire Lucy and Laxus dating thing and how Bix really hated it because he's kinda cute like that.

_And yes, this is set up to be the prequel to it, but it works just fine as a standalone story, so if you haven't read How I Met You, it's fine! _

_Also, yeah... This is M for a reason. Language, lime-y crap. Whatever. It's a prequel to HIMY and that story is honestly going to be full of all kinds of fun things, so if you have read that, then you really shouldn't have expected anything less for this one-shot, because they're in the same universe and is actually set around ten months before HIMY. _

_Anyway. On to the story! _

* * *

><p>Resolutions were always good things to have, and if you were to ask Laxus, he'd say the same thing. The Lightning Dragon Slayer was particularly fond of resolutions, and unsurprisingly, he happened to love making new ones each year.<p>

Unlike most people though, Laxus actually achieved his goals. He'd never once not achieved a single one of his New Year's Resolutions, and he wasn't about to start that year. They were only a few days into the new year, but Laxus was already wanting to set a new goal for him to achieve. The first of his resolutions was going to be fulfilled before the first week of the year was even over.

Laxus' resolutions â€" along with murdering Bickslow and getting away with it, having his grandfather finally decide to pass on the guild to his favourite and only grandson (though this one Laxus was willing to let go unfulfilled, as it had for the last several years), convincing the Seith mage to get another ridiculous tattoo, and moving out and getting his own place â€" for that year happened to include another blonde in the guild, one that he would willingly admit terrified him sometimes but also turned him on far too much for his own good. And his resolution for that particular ball of nightmares (and wet dreams, in Laxus' case) just happened to be to make her his.

Laxus just really wanted to get the girl.

The same girl who had a slightly psychotic team. But that didn't bother Laxus. He could handle them easily. He was Laxus Dreyar, after all, and his own team was just a little insane.

But aside from the fact that Laxus wasn't all that sure if Lucy wanted to go out with him, Laxus' other problem was Bickslow. Bickslow was undoubtedly closer to Lucy than he was, and on more than one occasion, Laxus had teased the Seith mage about his crush on the woman. But apparently, that crush didn't exist. Bickslow claimed that he wasn't into the blonde, but Laxus had his doubts, and as much as he really did love fucking with the guy, he wasn't exactly going to go and ask the girl he liked out on a date.

If Bickslow really did like her, then Laxus would back off. He hoped it wasn't the case though, because if the Seith mage did like her, then Laxus was going to have to hold off on calling the guy a pussy for not doing anything in the way of asking her out himself in the last year they'd been friends. He'd cope though. Somehow.

But still, Laxus needed to know, and he had the perfect opportunity to do so that night. Freed was having dinner with the Strauss family that night (and as soon as he got home, he was going to be hounded about whether or not he'd asked the barmaid out yet), Evergreen was probably there too, not that Laxus knew what she got up to most nights now that she'd finished moving out of the house and into the dorms, and Bickslow wasn't off at some bar getting drunk or fucking some stranger. With Bickslow, though, it was almost a miracle he hadn't managed to get any of the women he slept with knocked up. Laxus was sure that the day the Seith managed to father any child would also be the day the world ended, and it wouldn't be a coincidence. But with Bickslow being home that night, Laxus had a chance to bring up the topic of a particular blonde that they both had a tendency to hit on; Bickslow more so than Laxus.

The Lightning Slayer walked into the lounge with a bottle of whisky in one hand and two glasses in the other. Bickslow was lounging in the corner of the lounge with one foot on the ground and his other leg bent at the knee and against the adjacent backrest, a bag of strawberry and cream lollies sitting on a pillow next to him, and watching a horror movie that Laxus knew he'd watched so many times he could probably recite the entire thing while absentmindedly patting one of the babies that was sitting in his lap. The little things were so odd sometimes, but Laxus had been living with Bickslow long enough to know that they were somewhere between humans and cats "they had the attitudes and bad mouth that their master did, but they liked being petted and they made some of the strangest yet adorable purring noises ever when they were.

He poured some whisky into the glass and held it out to the Seith mage and sat down the opposite end of the lounge with a sigh. "Oh. Thanks," Bickslow mumbled.

Laxus gave a half hearted grunt as a response, then stared at the lacrima-vision screen on the opposite side of the room before finally saying, "Hey, Bix? I gotta talk to you about something."

Bickslow glanced to the blond and grimaced. "Can you not? It's weird when we talk. We don't do talking."

"Shut up, you moron." He was right though. They didn't do talking. They were best friends, sure, but they didn't do that kind of thing. It was weird. "But c'mon, I'm serious."

"Serious, huh? You accidentally kill someone or something?"

_ If I ever kill anyone, it will be you._ "No. About" About Blondie, alright?" Laxus said quickly. It wasn't exactly like he wanted to be having that conversation, but it needed to happen.

Bickslow finally seemed to forget about the movie he was watching as he suddenly looked to Laxus, and he raised an eyebrow at the man. "Cosplayer? Why do you want to talk about her?"

"Because I want to ask her out."

"Then do it?"

"Well" Would you care if I did?" Laxus asked. He watched the Seith mage for any kind of reaction, a hint of jealousy or hurt, but he didn't get that. Instead, he only got the man's well known, far too loud and far too maniacal cackle. He even got the babies giggling, too. Feeling just a little confused, Laxus sat back slightly. "What?"

"Do you think I'd actually care?" Bickslow managed to choke out before he fell over onto the other side of the lounge and continued to laugh hysterically. Bickslow was used to Laxus (and Gajeel, and Mira, and even Evergreen once or twice along with Erza) asking if he liked Lucy, but the answer was still no. The answer was always going to be no. He flirted with her and told her really horrible and inappropriate jokes, but that was just because he knew they annoyed her. That was mostly what their friendship was based on, and it was

never going to be anything more than that: a friendship.

Bickslow had thought Laxus would have learned that by now.
_Apparently not. _

"Wellâ€¦ If you like her, then yeah," the Slayer mumbled. Awkward usually wasn't a feeling he was familiar with, but right then, that's all he felt. He didn't like it one tiny bit.

Bickslow's mood turned so quickly it honestly frightened Laxus, even though it wasn't the first time he'd seen it happen in all the years he'd known him. Sitting up silently and taking a sip of the whisky like he hadn't just been laughing like a madman, Bickslow shrugged and said, "Nah, I don't. Go ask her out if you want to." _She'll probably say no anyway._

Laxus nodded. _Well, solves that little problem. _If he said he didn't like her, then Laxus was going to believe him that time. "I will." _Tomorrow_. Laxus didn't exactly know how he was going to do so, but he'd do it at some point that day. "Alright. Good talk," he muttered, and without thinking, he reached over and found himself patting the Seith mage's knee as he got up from the lounge.

"Don't ever do that again."

He nodded again. That, he could agree upon. That was weird. He didn't even know where it had come from. "Nope." With the bottle of whisky in his hand and the empty again glasses in his other after stealing Bickslow's back, he slowly left the Seith mage to watch his stupid movie. "Don't fall asleep on the lounge again," he called over his shoulder when he heard the babies begin to purr again.

"Yes, Mother," came Bickslow's response, and Laxus only rolled his eyes.

* * *

><p>The next morning saw Laxus making a bit of a detour on his trip from the house to the guild. It wasn't the first time he'd done so. Quite frequently over the last few weeks Laxus had been found accidentally running into Lucy on her way to the guild each morning, and more than once over those last few weeks, Bickslow had called him a stalker for doing so.

He wasn't stalking her, thank you very much. He was merely talking to her because he was too much of a wimp to talk to her very much in the guild and risk all of the nosy bastards she surrounded herself with finding out that he, Laxus fucking Dreyar, liked Lucy. It was bad enough Mira was giving him hell about it, all because Freed had told her, but it still wasn't as if he didn't want people to know. People would find out once they actually started dating (which, Laxus was confident would happen pretty soon, because he'd never once been turned down for a date in his lifeâ€¦ Except by Lucy once before, coincidentally), but until then, was it too much for Laxus to just want to keep _some_ aspects of his life away from guild mates?

Surely not.

He strolled up beside the blonde that morning with his hands in his

pockets and his coat over his shoulders. "Mornin'."

Lucy looked up and smiled brightly at the other mage. "Good morning, Laxus," she said happily, and, like she did every morning when they walked together, she could only hope that he wasn't able to hear her heart beating erratically. It drove her insane that he could do that, but she certainly wasn't going to do anything about it, no matter how many times Mira and Cana had told her to actually flirt a little with him. "How's your day so far?"

"Eh, not bad." _Here's to hoping it's about to get better._ "You?" he asked.

Lucy shrugged. "Okay, I suppose. It's still early, so we'll see how things go."

"Sounds good," Laxus mumbled. He cleared his throat as they crossed one of the bridges over the canals that ran through the town. _I should probably just get it over with._ "But hey," he began again, "I wanted to ask you something."

"Oh, okay?"

Damn it. I'm not nervous. "Are you doing anything tomorrow night?" he asked, and watched her out of the corner of his vision for any kind of reaction.

Lucy turned away when she felt the heat crawl onto her cheeks. There was no way he was asking her what her plans were for the next night. Or if he was, it couldn't have been because he was asking her on a _date_. That was just preposterous. _Though it would explain why he's been talking to me so much latelyâ€¦_ _Oh god, Lucy. Stop it._ _He isn't asking you out._ "U-Um, no, I don't think so," she unfortunately stammered. "Why do you ask?"

"'Cause I was wondering if you wanted to do something."

"O-Oh." _Okayâ€¦ Okayâ€¦_ So maybe he __**does**__ like me. When the __**fuck**__ did that happen?! _Glancing up and hugging Plue to her chest so tight she was almost suffocating the poor spirit, Lucy whispered, "Like aâ€¦ Like a date?"

"Unless you don't want it to beâ€¦" Laxus drawled.

"N-No! No, Iâ€¦ I do," she said quickly, and she gave a quiet and nervous chuckle. She could see Laxus smirking when she looked back up again and it only made her blush even more. "So tomorrow night then?" she inquired sweetly.

Laxus nodded. "Seven p.m. okay?" Lucy nodded her head quickly as the spirit in her arms made some sort of noise that Laxus wasn't sure about, and he gave her a strangely genuine and soft smile before giving a slight wave. "I'll see you around then, Blondie."

Before Lucy could even respond, the static electricity in the air around her increased and she was surrounded by a booming crackling sound, and the Lightning Slayer was disappearing as a bolt of lightning. Lucy only stared at burnt ground right next to where she'd frozen in place, then up to the curious glances those around her were aiming at her. "Well, that's one way to go out," she muttered to

herself.

And so as Lucy continued to head to guild, now in a slight daze and realising that she hadn't been on an actual date for six months, Laxus was walking into the guild hall and breathing a quiet sigh of relief. Asking Lucy out shouldn't have been so painful, yet it had been, and all Laxus could be thankful for was that Bickslow hadn't been able to witness it.

If he had, he'd probably never be able to live it down.

Or, he'd end up in jail for killing his best friend.

* * *

><p>"You're kidding, right?"<p>

Laxus smirked as he sat back in the chair. "Nope. Tomorrow night," he said.

"Wowâ€|" Bickslow muttered before carefully lifting the full mug of ale to his mouth.

He was surprised, truly. He hadn't expected Lucy to actually say yes to going out with Laxus at all, but she had, and he was surprised. And suddenly, Bickslow was realising that he was actually kind of annoyed, and it wasn't because he was jealous. He wasn't even close to being jealous because he really didn't like her. There was a difference between wanting to sleep with her and wanting to date her, and that was where the difference was between himself and Laxus.

Laxus, although he wanted to sleep with her, apparently wanted to date her, too. The latter was a desire Bickslow lacked.

Bickslow was still annoyed though. His best friend just had to like the one girl in the entire fucking guild that he liked flirting with on a near daily basis. He couldn't exactly do that if she was dating said best friend, could he?

Bickslow almost hoped that it didn't work out with them, just because he didn't know what he was going to do with himself if he wasn't able to annoy the living hell out of Lucy. He could always annoy Freed or Evergreen, or maybe even Gajeel some more, but no one was quite the same as one Miss Lucy Heartfilia. He really did just like annoying her.

But he couldn't do that now. It wouldn't be appropriate to hit on her and tell her horrible, dirty jokes if she was with Laxus, and contrary to popular belief, Bickslow did actually have a sense of what was considered appropriate and what wasn't. He just didn't care most of the time, because he didn't have to anymore.

With Laxus though, Bickslow was going to sure as hell remember where the new boundaries were. The last thing he needed was a scary Dragon Slayer getting all possessive and having another reason to shock the shit out of him. That had happened so many times that Bickslow was almost convinced the entire reason he didn't have any unwanted children yet was because of Laxus.

Sterilisation by electrocution had to be a thing.

"So," Bickslow began as he set his mug back down on the table, "What exactly are you planning to do on this date of yours?" Even if Bickslow had tried to, he wouldn't have been able to keep the petulance from his voice.

"Uh. Shit," Laxus mumbled. He hadn't exactly figured that part out yet, and considering he now had less than twenty-four hours until he was picking her up, he was realising that was a problem. "Uhâ€¦ I don't know. Fuck." He strangely didn't want to do his usual routine with Lucy.

Bickslow rolled his eyes. "You are quite literally the saddest excuse for a man sometimes."

"Oi, watch it."

"Well, you are," Bickslow muttered. "You ask her out and you don't even have any plan for what you're gonna do with her? Pathetic."

Laxus sat up and arched an eyebrow at the man. Something wasn't right there. "What the fuck is your problem?" he chided.

"I don't have a problem. You're the one with the problem right now, not me."

Laxus knew Bickslow well, and he knew that he tended to get a bit defensive at times. Right then was one of those times, but Laxus didn't understand why. What Laxus also knew, though, was that sometimes it wasn't all that worth finding out whatever was annoying the Seith mage. So when Laxus didn't understand why Bickslow was being the way he was right then, he had a feeling he didn't want to know why, especially when there was a chance it had to do with Lucy. Laxus was choosing to believe otherwise, though.

He sat back again and shrugged. "Alright then. If you say so," he mumbled.

Bickslow continued to scowl under his visor. He liked the guy, just because he was his best friend, but sometimes Laxus was just so infuriating and Bickslow didn't think he knew it. But maybe it was all just because Bickslow was annoyed and it had honestly ruined his evening and he was letting that ruin his mood, too. That wasn't that out of the ordinary for Bickslow, especially as of late where everyone had just been driving each other up the goddamn wall with each tiny little thing.

The Seith mage could feel his headache begin to worsen though, and with that came the all too familiar eye strain. Getting up, Bickslow quietly announced, "I have a headache. I'll see you later." He'd only been in the guild that night for a little while, having had a few errands to run during the afternoon after he'd woken up around noon, but the guild was the last place Bickslow needed to be right then. He needed someplace dark and quiet.

And so that was exactly why Bickslow found himself on the roof of a toy store a little while later. He hadn't been able to stay at the guild, and he hadn't felt like going straight home.

He rubbed at his temples after removing his visor. He knew he shouldn't care as much as he did about Laxus going on a date with Lucy, but he just couldn't help it. So maybe he was just a little jealous, but it was really just because Lucy was one of his closer friends, considering all things, and if she was with Laxus, he couldn't really acknowledge his friendship with her at all, just because of what it was based on. That sucked more than Bickslow cared to admit.

But he couldn't let Laxus know that. Part of Bickslow really did hope that things didn't work out with them, and he also doubted they'd last more than three months at best, but he wasn't exactly going to go and actively ruin his best friend's sort of relationship. Bickslow knew he was just going to have to find a way to cope with not being able to hit on the Stellar mage. Who knows? Maybe he'd actually find more reasons to strike up actual conversations with her for a change. Of the limited number of actual conversations they'd had, Bickslow had actually enjoyed them all, and it really wasn't like Bickslow talked to that many people.

Sighing then, Bickslow looked up to the floating tiki dolls and quietly asked, "I should probably help Laxus, shouldn't I?" Laxus had more dating experience than Bickslow did, but he was still useless. Bickslow doubted Laxus would even know where to begin when it came to dating Lucy, and it wasn't like Bickslow would either, but he knew her a whole lot better than Laxus did.

"Probably," Pappa said.

"Or you could just watch it go up in flames before it even starts," Poppo suggested.

Bickslow sighed again. "It's tempting, but no. If Laxus fucks up, it'll just disappoint Cosplayer," he mumbled. He couldn't exactly let that happen, no matter how much he hoped they didn't work because of his own selfish reasons.

* * *

><p>When Bickslow got home a little later that same night, he was greeted by Freed and Mira laughing in the kitchen, drinking wine and cooking dinner together. If Bickslow hadn't known any better, he would've assumed they were actually dating, but they weren't, unfortunately.<p>

"Oh, good evening, Bickslow," Freed said, looking up from the chopping board in front of him. "Laxus said you had a headache earlier. Are you feeling better?"

"Uh, yeah, I guess," Bickslow mumbled. He still needed to go close himself in his room in the dark to get rid of it, but whatever. "Is Laxus home?" he asked as he pulled his visor off once again.

"He's taking a shower at the moment," the Runes mage answered.

Bickslow sighed. Right. Don't want to walk in on that. He might be into guys a little, but he wasn't into Laxus. Not even close. He ran a hand through his hair as he headed for the stairs. "Tell him I need

to talk to him when he's out then?"

"Of course."

"Do you not want to join us for dinner, Bickslow?" Mira chimed in politely. "There's going to be plenty."

Bickslow shook his head and gave a small smile over his shoulder. "Nah, I'm good. Thanks though," he said, and then continued to slowly climb the stairs to go up to his room.

By the time Laxus was out of the shower and coming up the stairs to find the Seith mage, he was sitting up in his bed with his back against the wall the bed was up against, To Kill a Mockingbird open on his lap, and the babies all settled on pillows or in the tangled sheets. It didn't surprise Laxus to find Bickslow with the plain black rectangular glasses on, either, since whenever he started getting a headache or his eyes started to hurt because of his magic, they'd come out.

When his door opened, Bickslow looked up from his book. "Oh. Hey," he said, seeing the blond in the doorway.

"Hey," Laxus responded. "Freed said you wanted me?"

Bickslow nodded and set his book aside to reach for the cloak he had thrown across the bed just next to him. "Yeah. Uh, did you manage to come up with something to do for your date tomorrow yet?"

"Nope."

The Seith mage had to fight back the urge to shake his head. Or call Laxus pathetic. Or groan because it was just so annoying still. He pulled out a folded out flyer from one of the pockets in his cloak then held it out to Laxus, all while avoiding looking at the questioning gaze as he said, "Take her to this."

Laxus looked down to the piece of paper with an eyebrow raised. "What is it?" he asked before reading it.

"It's a thing at the observatory. Exhibition type thing on constellations and all that shit, which she's very into, if you didn't already know. It opens tomorrow night, soâ€¦ Take her to that after drinks or dinner or some fucking shit and pretend to be really into what she says if you want a chance at fucking her."

Laxus had to admit that it was a pretty great idea, and it was surprisingly thoughtful, too. It was the kind of evening that Laxus knew would get him in Lucy's good books which was exactly what he wanted, but the only problem with all of that was that it had come from Bickslow.

The man was handing him a perfect first date for Lucy on a silver fucking platter, but it only worried Laxus. "Shit, man. This isâ€¦ This is great," he remarked. "How'd you come up with this though? And why?"

How? Because Bickslow had known about it for the last two weeks and he'd been planning on telling Lucy about it because he knew it was

something she'd be interested in. He figured she'd probably take someone like Levy or Loke. He would've been quite happy going with her himself if she'd wanted him to, just as friends, because it was surprisingly something he wouldn't mind learning more about.

Bickslow couldn't tell Laxus that, though, and he certainly couldn't tell that it was what he'd have done if it had been him going on a date with Lucy. No way in hell. Shrugging, Bickslow picked up the novel again and instead said, "Remembered seeing something about it when I was out earlier." A lie. A blatant, incredibly obvious lie. "And because you're my best friend and you're being painfully pathetic with this, that's why. Take it or leave it, I don't fucking care. Just thought you could use the help, that's all."

"Oh. Alright then." That was a logical answer. Laxus pocketed the page and turned back for the door since he had no real reason to stay in Bickslow's room. "I owe you one, Bix."

"Forget about it," he mumbled. "Just—" Bickslow bit the inside of his cheek as Laxus looked over his shoulder and waited for what it was he had to say. The problem was just that Bickslow didn't know if he should say it. It would probably be better if he didn't, but he wanted to. Hell, it almost felt like he needed to say it. So quietly, refusing to look up from his book, he finally said, "Just don't mess with her. She's too good for that." She's too good for
—**you**—.

* * *

><p>Lucy smiled as she turned around in front of her door. "Well, I guess this is goodnight," she laughed nervously.<p>

"Yup, seems like it," Laxus mumbled.

Could you make it any more obvious you don't like this? God. Lucy had to refrain from just turning around and slamming her door in his face, because as much as she wanted to do that, it would be considered rude. Lucy wasn't rude. As politely as she could muster, she instead said, "I had a nice time tonight, Laxus."

"Good."

Oh my god, this is horrible— Lucy couldn't deal with it anymore. She just couldn't. It was too uncomfortable and she had better things to do, like sit in her apartment and drink tequila. Alone. That was always fun to do after a horrible date. Reaching into her purse to pull out her house keys, she quickly unlocked her door and pushed it open just enough to reach inside and switch on the lights. She needed to get out of there, and fast. "Well, goodnight then!" she said far too happily with a slight wave.

Laxus nodded. "Yeah, night," he mumbled again. As soon as the door was closed, he was turning back down the stairs to get out of the building. He knew that he'd been a little awkward for a few moments, not that he'd understood why, but overall Laxus thought their date had gone pretty well. He was pretty damn sure he'd get a second, especially if she'd enjoyed herself which she apparently had.

But even if Laxus was confident their date had gone well, he wasn't

at all surprised he hadn't gotten so much as a kiss on the cheek from the woman. Sure, his night would have been a whole lot better if Lucy was the type to invite anyone in for 'coffee' after one date, but he was fine with working for that invitation. He liked a challenge sometimes.

So as Laxus walked home that night, he did so with his perverted and twisted smirk, all because he was imagining just what else he could get up to with the blonde, along with what else their dates would entail. He was just so damn sure there'd be more.

Lucy, on the other hand, who was already sitting on her lounge with a bottle of tequila in front of her, didn't expect much. Once she'd found out where it was he'd been planning on taking her that night, she'd been so excited. She hadn't expected Laxus to do something like that in the slightest.

But then it had gone downhill from there. He'd been the one to get her to start talking about each of the constellations and her spirits, yet every time Lucy had turned around, he'd seemed so bored out of his mind. And she'd known that he was. It hadn't surprised her that he wasn't interested in that kind of stuff, but the least the guy could have done was pretend to care. Laxus had just made it so painfully obvious he hadn't enjoyed his night and it really did hurt Lucy, because she did like him.

She had more feelings for Laxus than she wanted to admit, even if most of those were just because he was too damn attractive and she loved his tattoo, but after their first date, they'd severely diminished. But even then, on her fourth tequila shot, Lucy was still sure she'd go on a second date with him, because she wanted to believe that his quietness and reservation had just been all part of first date nerves.

But he was Laxus. She didn't see him as being the type to get nervous.

She realised that it was probably just for the best she not expect any more dates with the blond. It wasn't worth getting disappointed over.

* * *

><p>Laxus looked up when Bickslow sat down beside him at the bar. He wasn't even going to ask where he'd been the night before and that morning, because Laxus already knew that he'd been somewhere else, or more accurately, with someone else.

But for once in his life, Laxus was actually glad to see the Seith mage. He unfortunately needed his help with Lucy again, and if Laxus could avoid having to ask Bickslow for his help, he would. So when the first thing Bickslow did after sitting down was ask about his date, Laxus was actually relieved.

"I thought it was great," Laxus began to explain, his voice hushed because the last thing he wanted right then was the barmaid from hell getting involved again. "You know, pretended I was into the whole stars shit and all. Walked her home. Didn't even fucking kiss her or anything 'cause I knew she didn't want me to. She said she had a good time and all, too."

"Uh-huhâ€| "

Lexus glanced over his shoulder to where Lucy was sitting with her team, and Bickslow followed his gaze. "But now she's avoiding me."

Bickslow scoffed. "That was fast. What'd you do?" he asked. He knew it wasn't because of what the date had entailed. It was because of Lexus. It had to be.

"I didn't fucking do anything," the blond hissed. Or at least, Lexus was sure he hadn't. He was so confused, and confused was a feeling he really did not like. He'd been so sure their night had been great, and he'd been wanting to maybe flirt with her a little in the guild that day or maybe even ask her out again, but no. That plan had failed when he realised she'd been doing her best to politely avoid him. It was annoying, too.

"You sure?"

"Positive."

The Seith mage shrugged. "Well, you tried. Move on, Spark Plug." _Move on so I can go back to hitting on her, thank you very much.

—

"No," Lexus said, and Bickslow raised an eyebrow beneath his visor.

"No? What you gonna go? Stalk her?" he joked. Stalking wasn't really in Lexus' repertoire because he usually never chased anyone because no one had ever really been worth it to him, but still, annoying Lexus was far too fun. Bickslow had long accepted that he was probably going to drive either him or Gajeel to murdering him one day, but that was fine.

"No. You're gonna talk to her and find out what's wrong with her," Lexus stated.

Bickslow narrowed his eyes at the blond man. Oh, he could feel another headache coming on already. Lexus was driving him insane.

"Why do you assume it's her and not _you_?"

"Because it has to be her. Just go and talk to her, alright? I'll pay your share of the bills for the next three months or something. Just do it."

"Three months? Oh! Look at all the useless crap I could actually afford with that!"

"Oh, shut up, _Mister Inheritance_," Lexus muttered.

Bickslow had to try his hardest not to punch the guy right then at there. Sometimes, it was far too tempting, and when he said stupid shit like that, it was even more so. Bickslow didn't want to get involved in their relationship, whether it was actually one or not. He hoped it wasn't, but still, getting involved was a bad idea. It was bad enough Bickslow had even given Lexus the date idea, but going and talking to Lucy to find out what was supposedly wrong with _her_

(even though Bickslow already knew that it wasn't her and that it was Laxus) was a horrible idea.

He only shook his head firmly and ignored the comment about his bank balance. "I'm not going and talking to her. That's a fucking stupid idea," he said.

Laxus was close to begging. He didn't want to be having to ask Bickslow to do that, but out of the two of them and everyone else that Laxus talked to, Bickslow was the one that got along with her the best. Laxus just really needed to find out what had happened. "Bix, please. C'mon, man," he pleaded, and that was something Laxus never did. "I like her, okay? I didn't wanna fuck it up, but she's acting like I did and it's annoying."

_Well, at least he sort of knows he fucked up, considering all things. _Bickslow still didn't want to get involved, but when Laxus is like that, he doesn't have much of a choice. He quickly got up from the stool and gave Laxus a glare that could be seen even with his visor. "I hate you," he muttered. On the best of days, he was actually close to hating Laxus. But this? This just made Bickslow really hate him.

Laxus didn't dare say anything as Bickslow almost stormed through the guild. He didn't want to be doing that, but he managed to get himself in check somewhat by the time he'd reached Lucy. "Oi, Cosplayer," Bickslow said. He didn't stop when he reached her. Instead, he only slowed down. "I gotta talk to you."

Lucy looked over her shoulder with a frown when she heard Bickslow, just to see him continue heading towards the doors. She was curious about what it was he wanted to talk to her about, so that was why she was excusing herself from her conversation with Erza and Natsu as politely as she could and was heading to the exit.

It was raining when she got outside, which wasn't all that surprising since it was the middle of winter, and although she doubted they'd get snow before the season's end, it was still cold. But what did surprise Lucy, though, was that there was a floating umbrella with a rather tall Seith mage with a scowl standing under it right outside the doors, keeping both of them from getting wet.

"Walk with me," was all Bickslow said once Lucy had joined him under the umbrella.

Lucy nodded. She waited until they were off the guild's grounds before finally asking, "So what was it you wanted to talk to me about?" That fact it couldn't be something discussed in or apparently near the guild only had her curiosity rising even more.

"You," Bickslow answered. "Well, and Laxus."

She groaned and folded her arms. Laxus was the one thing she didn't want to talk about. "Why?" she complained. "There's nothing to talk about there."

"Tell me about your date last night."

"Pass," Lucy scoffed. "I'm sure Laxus could tell you all about that himself."

"He could, and he already kinda did, but I want to to hear it from you," he said. Bickslow could see her hesitation when he glanced down to her. He didn't blame her for it, either. He was already convinced that the two had very different opinions on how great their date had been, and he was almost glad that that was the case, but he was having to remind himself that he was there as Laxus' friend, not so much as Lucy's right then.

Lucy sighed and shook her head. She folded her arms across her chest and gave the wet path a hard glare while ignoring how her arm was touching Bickslow's as they continued to walk. It didn't matter, anyway, just like her date with Laxus. It was why she was ignoring him. It had been one date, and it was the first and last she'd go on with him. She knew that. Where was the point of acting like there could be anything else? "It doesn't matter," she muttered as Bickslow continued to glance down at her every few seconds. "There's really just nothing to talk about. It was horrible and a waste of time."

Bickslow only rolled his eyes. She wasn't going to make it easy for him, was she? Bickslow was finding himself really wanting to know just why their date had been so horrible. If it was because of Laxus, then Bickslow was going to find it hard not to laugh. If it was because of what they'd done on their date, which from what Bickslow could tell had been exactly what he'd suggested in the first place, then that was going to be strangely disappointing.

He stuck his elbow out just to nudge her gently and he gave a semi-genuine smile when she frowned up at him. "Come on, tell me more. Was it because of what you did on your date? Or was it just Laxus being a dick as usual?" he asked, and he internally rejoiced at the small smirk it brought.

Lucy figured Bickslow wasn't going to drop it, so sighing again she reluctantly began, "No, what we did was fine. It was actually really nice because we went to this little exhibition event at the observatory and I was kind of amazed that he'd come up with something so thoughtful."

_Not that __**he**__ came up with itâ€¦!_ But Bickslow couldn't tell Lucy that _he_ was the mastermind behind their date. Laxus would kill him. Though he did love the fact that that was what Lucy thought of it. He'd known (or hoped) that would be what she thought, but it was nice hearing it.

"But he just acted like he didn't care and he didn't want to be there all night and it was just so frustrating," Lucy continued. "It just sucked. I shouldn't have gone in the first place."

Could've told you that. Bickslow was finding himself with a new problem though. As much as he almost hated that Laxus liked her and had managed to epically fuck up a date (_somehow_, because Bickslow had no idea), he hated that Lucy had had a horrible night even more, and all because of what? Because Laxus was too much of an idiot to behave like a normal person who happened to have feelings for someone? He couldn't stop being a bastard who was used to getting everything he wanted for _one_ night, and where did it get him? It got him fucking up a really fucking weird relationship before it had even really started.

Bickslow didn't exactly care about the latter, of course, because he only thought Laxus _deserved_ Lucy ignoring him now. But Lucy kind of got hurt from it, which Bickslow didn't like, and it was really just a case of their feelings getting lost in translation somewhere. How, Bickslow didn't think he'd ever understand.

He had to refrain from actually taking his visor off then just to slap his own forehead. He already had the babies in his head giving him all sorts of hell for what was going through his head, so he knew it was a stupid idea. So with a heavy sigh, Bickslow finally asked, "Look, do you like him?"

She shrugged. "Iâ€¦ I guess. It doesn't matter thâ€¦"

"He likes you," he said, cutting her off. The look of sheer surprise she gave him almost made him want to vomit. Why couldn't _she_ feel sick over that knowledge? It would make him feel a whole lot better about it. "He does."

"He has a funny way of showing it then."

"Yeah, but that's just because he's Laxus and he's a dumbass." He couldn't even believe he was trying to defend the guy, but Lucy almost choking and laughing was worth it. Chuckling with her, he added, "But seriously, he is. And he does like you. He's justâ€¦"

"Horrible at showing it? Really bad at dating? A bit of an asshole?" Lucy guessed.

Bickslow grinned and said, "All of the above." They stopped when he realised they were just outside her apartment building, then walked her up to the doors so she wasn't going to have to get wet. "Butâ€¦ If you like him, justâ€¦ I dunno, give him another chance or something. If it counts for anything, he doesn't know he fucked up. He's really not very good at the whole dating thing and he's got it stuck in his head that everyone is automatically going to think the world of him and fall for him and want to fuck him without him lifting a finger."

Lucy pursed her lips and looked up to the Seith mage. She couldn't quite tell where Bickslow stood. On one hand it seemed like he was truly trying to defend Laxus, but on the other, it seemed like he just didn't care at all. She didn't understand it, but she wanted to know for some reason. "What do you think I should do then?" she asked quietly.

"Nuh-uh. I'm staying out. If I wanted a relationship, I'd go and get myself into one. I don't need to be any more involved with you two than I already am."

"But we're just talking, aren't we? That's not really getting involved," Lucy explained. "I just want your opinion, Bickslow."

He shrugged. "Mine doesn't matter."

"Please?"

_Why do you want to know? _Bickslow knew he could lie and tell her

what Laxus would want him to say, but he wasn't going to. He justâ€¦ Couldn't. So he didn't. "He fucked up. Move on. Go find someone who's actually good for you or something," he finally said. "Don't get hung up on a dick like Laxus."

For some reason, that was what Lucy expected him to say, and it was almost what she wanted to hear. She was still just a little surprised that Bickslow was even talking to her at all right then and hadn't hit on her at all or told her any perverted jokes, because it was a rare occasion when he didn't do that. She did like it when they just talked though, because as Lucy was becoming even more aware of, he was truly a nice person and he did care â€" more than he let on, anyway.

Still though, Lucy knew she had some thinking to do, so she was suddenly glad that Bickslow had probably subconsciously walked her home. She couldn't think about what she was to do about Laxus whilst she was in the guild. She smiled up at the Seith mage as she stepped up to the doors to her building. "Thanks, Bix." He only shrugged and caught the umbrella in his hand as one of the totems flew out from what she guessed to be a pocket in his cloak. "I'll see you around."

But that was what was annoying for Bickslow. He had a feeling he'd be seeing a whole lot more of her, just because she was exactly the type of person to give someone a second, third, fourth, hell, a fucking twentieth chance, and he suspected that Laxus would be no exception to that rule. The difference now was that Bickslow also suspected that Laxus would do a whole lot more to make sure he didn't fuck it up again, but Bickslow was almost wishing he wouldn't.

He couldn't exactly let either of them know he would be waiting for the exact moment whatever the fuck they had between them to go up in flames. He wasn't that much of an asshole.

* * *

><p>Lucy did, as expected, decide to give Laxus another chance. Somewhere deep down she knew she shouldn't have, and it had been especially tempting to let Bickslow's opinion and advice sway her decision, but she hadn't.<p>

She'd wanted to believe that it was just first date jitters and that Laxus wasn't always that much of a jerk (whether he meant to be was still irrelevant). Lucy did still like him for some ungodly reason. He was tall and handsome, over-confident yet mysterious, and Lucy was sure he had a soft spot somewhere, even though he really was a bit of a bastard. But that Lucy had admittedly known for a while.

But giving Laxus a second chance at actually dating her (he apparently liked her, so Lucy assumed that was what he kind of wanted) was how she ended up with her face pressed into her mattress and her ass up in the air while Laxus fucked her from behind. She'd never really had any intentions of having sex with him on a second date, but the only thing she'd had in her head that night was something that Bickslow had said: that he's not good at dating and he just automatically assumes that everyone is going to want to fuck him. And granted, Lucy had, but she'd wanted to wait until maybe a third or fourth date until they went that far. That plan had failed though, because Bickslow's words getting stuck in her head had only

made Lucy want to try and get Laxus to stop being so awkward.

She'd only invited him over for dinner, for fuck's sake. It wasn't like he'd had a reason to be that awkward. True, he'd been a little more flirty and he'd taken more of an interest in their conversation, but he'd been awkward nonetheless, and Lucy had hated it. So awkwardness led to Lucy giving up and kissing him, kissing led to making out, and making out led to Lucy being in her current situation with her face pressed into her mattress.

The position itself wasn't what bothered Lucy. She preferred it, to be quite honest, and when missionary and everything even close to resembling it is taken off the menu for reasons she was never going to explain to Laxus, it was perfectly fine. It wasn't even the fact that he'd even brought his own condom that was the issue (that, she had to admit she was amazed it, because it was a whole lot more than what most of the other guys she'd slept with had brought, though she also had to admit that it was a little worrying that he had. Did he expect to be getting laid that night, just because she'd invited him over for dinner? Probably). It was just that it was bad.

He was big, yes, and Lucy was pretty sure she'd be sore in the morning, and that wasn't even taking into the account the finger shaped bruises she suspected she already had on her hips. But he wasn't good.

And Lucy was used to horrible sex. She was even used to getting little to no satisfaction from it, too. But she'd had pretty high expectations for Laxus, because he just seemed to have that kind of aura that screamed he was good in bed.

Unfortunately not, it seemed.

It wasn't that terrible though. It only meant that not even Mister Laxus Dreyar would be able to make her orgasm with his dick alone. It was still somewhat pleasurable to Lucy, but like every other guy she'd been with, he was just not going to be able to get her high enough to have her actually screaming his name and meaning it. Though, as soon as Lucy did meet someone who could get her to cum, she was probably going to marry them, or at the very least, she was going to hold onto them.

But Lucy knew she could get herself to orgasm with Laxus, because that was what she mostly did, just because she often got so pent up that she needed that release (and there seemed to be a shortage of guys in Magnolia who were fans of going down on women, apparently). She honestly doubted he'd know that it was from her fingers and not because of him, because he seemed to be oblivious to the fact that she wasn't even enjoying it. She was on auto-pilot with her moans; occasionally giving an uh-huh to whatever he asked. She wasn't a fan of the dirty talk, but she'd survive. She wasn't paying all that much attention to him anyway because she was too busy getting lost in her own thoughts.

She just didn't know what to do. On one hand, she was glad that Laxus seemed to have loosened up a little, but on the other, she was almost wishing she'd actually listened to Bickslow's advice and let his opinion sway her decision. Getting hung up on someone wasn't a good idea, especially when she seemed to know that anything with Laxus was just not going to work out.

He justâ€¦ Didn't suit her. Then again, she hadn't exactly given him much of a chance to do so yet. All they'd done was have one horrible first date, a slightly awkward dinner, andâ€¦ Well, slightly enjoyable sex that Lucy really wished would just hurry up and end. The man's stamina was unbelievable.

She really did need him to finish though. She was getting tired and bored and he was honestly beginning to hurt. Lucy wasn't even slightly interested in climaxing that night. She just needed Laxus to so he could go the fuck home and she could sleep and think some more.

_I haven't said anything in a while, have I? Damn it. I probably should. _The blonde pushed herself to lean on her elbows and glanced over her shoulder with a roll of her eyes Laxus thankfully hadn't been able to see. "Fuck, right there," she gasped. _God, this is horrible._ "Just like that."

"Like this?"

She winced when a near violent thrust had her face-planting into the sheets again. "Mm-hmm." _Just hurry up and finish, you bastard. How much does it take to get you to cum? Jesus fucking Christ._

"Blondie likes it rough, huh?" Laxus sneered.

"Uh-huh." _Not __**this**__ rough._ She wasn't going to complain though. She didn't have the energy to.

Lucy had to stop herself from yelling _'fucking __**finally**__!'_ when the Lightning Slayer eventually and finally came with a long and low moan. At least, that was what Lucy hoped and assumed it was. She practically sighed in relief when he withdrew, and she crawled upwards to collapse down onto her pillows. She didn't even have the energy to find some clothes, and even then, she didn't care much. The guy had just fucked her and had obviously seen her without a stitch of clothing on her, so where was the point in putting clothes on if he would hopefully be leaving soon anyway?

Laxus came back after a few moments and collapsed down next to her with a sigh. He was instantly turning her head to face him so he could almost surprisingly gently kiss her, but Lucy didn't mind that. She just wanted him to go home so she could think, but post-sex kissing was fine. She rather enjoyed post-sex cuddling, too, but it was weird if it was a one-night stand. Laxus wasn't that though, so it was okay, even though it wasn't exactly _cuddling_. It was justâ€¦ Lucy somehow managing to find herself sprawled on top of a still very naked mage and kissing. And the only word that came to mind for Lucy was that it was nearly passionately, and considering the borderline violent, close to what hate fucking would probably feel like, sex, it was a very welcome change.

So maybe if things were going to be like that, they wouldn't be all bad. Because she did still like him. Lucy was just trying to figure out if it was worth maybe trying to make things work. Sliding back to her side to prop herself up on her elbow, she tried her best to ask as indifferently as possible, "Were you staying?" _Please say no. Please say no. Please say no. Please say no._

Lexus sighed. "Can't."

_Thank fucking god. _

"Got a train to catch in the morning," he said. The Slayer pulled himself up from the bed and away from the blonde. She stayed there as he went and found his discarded clothes, quickly pulling them all back on. He turned back to her as he was doing up the buttons on his shirt and a satisfied smirk pulled at his lips when he saw that she was probably close to going to sleep. He hadn't fucked her _that_ well, had he? _Of course I did._ "I should be back in a couple days," he announced.

Lucy nodded and gave a weak smile. _At least it gives me a few days to think._ "Alright."

"I'll see you then?" he asked, almost hopefully, too. "Like, we'll do something after?"

Lucy nodded again after a moment's hesitation. She had a feeling she already knew what her decision would be regarding Lexus. "If you want to," she whispered

"Alright then. I'll see you in a couple days then." He'd been able to pick up his coat from where it was on the chair at her desk when he stopped himself, and only quickly turned back and leant over the bed to kiss her again. Where was the harm in kissing now, considering they'd just done a whole lot more?

And so when Lexus finally left, closing the door behind him and walking down the stairs with what Lucy guessed to be a self-satisfied and smug grin, Lucy groaned and threw herself back down onto her pillow.

Why did dating have to be so difficult? Lucy only figured that the upside of staying with Lexus would be that she'd get laid. And it really wasn't all bad. It would probably be a whole lot more enjoyable for her if she managed to get him to tone it down a little, but right then, Lucy just wasn't sure what she was going to.

* * *

><p>Sex won out, of course, and after two weeks of it, Lucy had quickly realised that their relationship was pretty much based around them fucking each other.<p>

It really wasn't all bad. Sure, it was rough and she got a few almost invisible bruises on her hips (or even on her arms sometimes), but Lucy didn't mind all that much. It was a whole lot better than what their first time had been like, that was for sure. She still wasn't able to orgasm unless she was rubbing herself (or Lexus decided to be kind and go down on her, which she was really thankful for), but whatever. She didn't expect anything less, and she really was used to it.

The dates themselves wereâ€¦ Well, they were still a little awkward, but they were getting better. They didn't really have anything to talk about because they apparently shared no common interests, so that was really their downfall.

But the sex? Yeah, that was pretty much all Lucy was in it for by then, even though it wasn't all that spectacular. She still, for whatever reason, was really into the guy, even if he was a bastard and his stubbornness was just a little frustrating. The upside to Lucy still having feelings for the moron was that Laxus still really liked Lucy.

The difference was just that Laxus was mostly oblivious to the fact that they didn't work in the slightest. Lucy knew, she just chose to ignore it. Laxus just liked to live in the moment, and to him, that moment was just filled with a smoking hot blonde who was really good at riding him.

The unfortunate thing for Bickslow though, was that Laxus refused to shut up about Lucy. Lucy this, Lucy that. Could the guy rub it in his face any more that Lucy was dating him and it only meant Bickslow was stuck in a jealous and bitter state because he didn't even know how to talk to his friend anymore? Hell, he didn't even know how to talk to Laxus, either, because he was so worried that he'd just end up snapping and letting him know just how much it was bothering him that they were together.

He couldn't do that though, because if he did, Laxus would assume that he was jealous because Bickslow wanted her all to himself. Which, was kind of the truth, but not in the way that Bickslow knew Laxus would assume. He didn't want her in the way that Laxus had her â€" he didn't want to be her boyfriend. Bickslow just wanted her back as his friend, because he had come to realise that making her laugh or mostly just making her roll her eyes at him was one of the highlights of his days.

Or at least it had been.

Now all Bickslow really had to look forward to was getting drunk and finding someone to fuck him. It always made the days where Lucy would sit with Laxus and the rest of the Raijinshuu end on a much higher note, because those moments, he hated. Thankfully, he was good at hiding it, and that day for Bickslow was no different. He was practically having to stop himself from retching into his drink from the sight of the two blondes in front of him, the bigger one of the pair with his arm around the smaller (and much prettier) one.

It was disgusting. And weird. And Bickslow seemed to be the only one who saw that they really didn't work at all, and that wasn't his jealousy getting the better of him. Lucy just looked uncomfortable. And so horribly bored. She wasn't interested in what Laxus was saying, which coincidentally, Bickslow wasn't paying attention to.

He continued to grimace and scowl and roll his eyes beneath his visor while not saying a single fucking word, right up until Lucy began to push the Dragon Slayer's arm off of her and got up from her seat. Laxus looked to her and Bickslow continued to slowly sip from his mug that was thankfully not filled with his own vomitâ€¦ Yet. Alcohol though, it was, and Bickslow gave zero fucks that it was probably too early to be drinking. It was Fairy Tail after all, so no one would judge him if he was drunk before noon.

Lucy smiled. "I've got a few errands to run, so I'll see you later or something?"

"Oh, yeah," Laxus mumbled. "But hey, are you free tonight?"

"I should be," Lucy answered, and she quickly glanced between the mages at the table — Evergreen who quietly snickered behind her fan, Freed who seemed to be the only one with a straight face, Bickslow who was scowling from what Lucy could tell, even though he seemed to be making a point of hiding it, and to Laxus who was looking at her like he probably expected her change all of her plans to make sure she would be free. "Why? Did you want to do something?"

The Lightning Slayer shrugged. "Was thinking dinner and a movie or something?" Honestly, Laxus was still trying to figure out the whole dating part of dating Lucy because he was still trying to figure out how to talk to her. Talking didn't work so it mostly just ended with them having sex, which was fine, but still — She was his girlfriend, so they should talk. Laxus thought they were surprisingly good together (he was Laxus, after all. He was good with the ladies when he wanted to be), and he really didn't want to fuck it up again after what he had come to reluctantly accept was a horrible first date because of how he'd acted. He'd realised he probably should have asked her out again before they'd ended their night.

"That sounds good." She smiled and swung her small bag over her shoulder. "I'll be done with everything around six, so you can stop by around seven, unless you want to do it later?"

"Seven is fine." Three, four hours for their date, which left the rest of the night for them to fuck each other senseless. Perfect. He lifted his arm to wrap his hand around her elbow, then swiftly pulled her back down. "Hey, come 'ere," he growled, and before Lucy could question it, he reached up to cup her cheek with his other hand and pressed his lips to hers. Call it the dragon in him that was making him feel just a little possessive, but Lucy was his. They were dating and he was gonna kiss her in the guild, just because he could.

Lucy squawked uncharacteristically when he let her go, and her face was as red as the sky at sunset. That — She had not been expecting. Laxus really hadn't seemed like the type to do something like that. "I — I'll see you later then," she chuckled nervously, and Laxus only smirked as she quickly turned on her heels to leave.

* * *

><p>January was just a few days shy of ending, and unfortunately for Bickslow, Laxus and Lucy were still dating. It was making his life more problematic than he cared to admit, too, because he'd been arguing a lot more with Laxus ever since they'd started seeing each other. That wasn't a good thing, either, especially when they lived together and were part of the same team.<p>

When Bickslow went downstairs that morning, it was following a woman who was most obviously dressed in her previous night's clothes, and her wavy dark blonde hair that was down to her elbows desperately looked like it needed to have a comb run through it a couple hundred times. Laxus only watched silently while slowly eating his breakfast of toast and coffee as he walked her to the door, and he couldn't stop himself from chuckling quietly when she leant in to kiss the

Seith mage's cheek and he only cringed and let it happen before she slipped a ring back onto her finger and slipped out the door.

With the door closed once again, Laxus glanced up to Bickslow from where he sat at the breakfast bar and watched him run a hand through his dishevelled hair while pulling the fridge open with his other. "So," Laxus began, setting his coffee down, "Did you get this one's name?"

Bickslow narrowed his eyes at the blond. "Fuck off, Laxus." So he had a habit of not getting the name of whomever he slept with, or not remembering come morning because he was mostly hungover. He was honestly used to Laxus teasing him over it, not that the boss was much better, but Bickslow wasn't in the mood to deal with it that morning.

"Take that as a _no_, then."

"Laxus, don't aggravate him," Freed said carefully as he looked over his shoulder from where he stood in front of the stove.

"Hey, I'm not. I'm just asking Bix a simple question," Laxus retorted. He smirked as he looked back to Bickslow who was standing in front of him and sipping from a glass of pineapple juice, his eyes narrowed over the glass. "It's not my fault he doesn't know the name of whomever he's sticking his dick into."

"How the fuck do you even have a girlfriend?" Bickslow snapped. "You're such a cunt sometimes."

The blond shrugged a shoulder and took another bite of his raisin toast. "Ask my _girlfriend_ that."

_God, I hate you so much right now. _All Bickslow wanted to do was wrap his hands around his throat, but he couldn't. Aside from the fact that Laxus was a whole lot stronger than he was, he was still his best friend, considering all things. He just couldn't deal with the man right then. He needed a whole lot of air and space and even just closing himself in his room upstairs wouldn't be enough. He needed to get away from Laxus before he said something far worse.

Bickslow only slammed the fridge door again as one of the babies got dangerously close to flying into the side of Laxus' head. Freed only gave him a curious glance as he silently began to storm off back towards the stairs, and Laxus continued smirking. God, if only Bickslow could wipe that smirk off his face. "And her name was Kate, thank you very much," he growled. _Kate, Katieâ€| Something like that. _What did it even matter, anyway?

* * *

><p>Bickslow continued to sulk and scowl as he stood atop the babies and let them carry him across town. It was still early, and it was early enough that Bickslow didn't really know what to do since it was a time he was usually asleep, but between Laxus getting home and making noise in his bedroom right below Bickslow's, and the blonde â€" who Bickslow had unfortunately had to notice looked just a little like Lucy â€" waking up and wanting to snuggle, Bickslow had had no choice but to get up. He didn't do snuggling. At all.<p>

And since he'd been close to wanting to murder Laxus, he'd had no choice but to leave.

So now he was letting the babies talk him down from doing something ridiculous like get drunk at nine o'clock in the morning. He wasn't _that_ angry and jealous that he was going to become an alcoholic, even if more alcohol really was the best hangover cure.

_"Cosplayer's down there." _

His twisted thoughts about murdering Laxus halted when he heard Poppo. _"What?"_ he asked them silently.

_ "Cosplayer,"_ Poppo repeated.

"Down there," Puppu finished.

Bickslow looked down to the street he was above and searched the morning crowd for the head of blonde hair belonging to the one and only Cosplayer. He finally spotted her just as she left what Bickslow knew to be a small health clinic, and the babies slowly and silently lowered him so he was just above the building. He watched her silently for a few seconds until he saw her lift a hand to her cheek, and it was then that every single dark and murderous thought in his head about Laxus was replaced with worried ones for Lucy, because she was crying as she quickly tried to weave her way through the morning foot traffic, and Bickslow didn't know why.

He knew he could just leave it, because it wasn't exactly like he could talk to her those days _because_ of Laxus (and it was precisely why he could actually count on one hand the amount of words he'd said to her since he'd been roped into sorting out their weird as fuck relationship). But he couldn't. He was too worried about Lucy, and even if he couldn't really talk to her, he had to. They were still friends, after all.

Or at least Bickslow _hoped_ they were.

"Take me down, babies," he muttered. As soon as he was low enough, Bickslow was stepping down onto a balcony railing and then gracefully jumping down to the ground to quickly catch up to Lucy. "You okay?" he asked softly once he'd come up beside her, then instantly apologised when he realised he had startled her. "Sorry. Didn't mean to startle you."

"N-No, it'sâ€¦ It's fine," Lucy whispered, and she tried her best to discreetly wipe away the tears sliding down her cheeks. "And Iâ€¦ It doesn't matter."

She was a mess right then, undoubtedly. She hadn't slept all night because she'd spent the night in a hotel with Laxus who had only felt like being slightly romantic or something (though Lucy suspected that it was really just because he wouldn't have been able to get laid that night otherwise, between Lucy's apartment being unusable for the night from being in the middle of a slight renovation, thanks to her team fighting, and Laxus just not wanting to take her over to his place for whatever reason), and she'd just been too anxious to sleep because of her appointment that very morning. All Lucy wanted to do

right then was get home and curl up in a ball and cry and sleep, because she knew her apartment would be done by then. It was only supposed to take one day, after all.

What Lucy didn't need to do, was worry Bickslow about something he didn't need to worry about.

"Did you uhâ€¦ Get some bad news or something?" Bickslow asked carefully. If she walking out of a doctor's office in tears, then Bickslow couldn't help but assume it was the case.

She wrapped her arms around herself and kept looking down at the ground as they walked. "I guess you could call it that." Pretty sure getting told you wont ever be able to have kids is classified as bad news, but you don't need to know that._

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"No, thank you," Lucy whispered again. She forced a smile when she glanced back up and sniffled. "You don't need to get involved with this. It's okay."

Bickslow only frowned and continued to walk along with her. He could respect her decision to not want to talk about it, just because he figured it was something that was really quite personal. They weren't close enough to talk about stuff like that, and that was okay, but he was still worried about her. If anything, he was even more worried about her, and he almost wanted to be able to help her.

He couldn't though. He knew that.

And it sucked, especially so since it was the first time he'd talked her somewhat properly in the last few weeks and he kind of enjoyed it, considering all things.

Suddenly Bickslow was gently placing a hand on her back and swiftly turning her down into an alley just as they passed it. Lucy didn't get a chance to ask just what was going on â€" or even find a way to quickly excuse herself before she burst into tears â€" before the Seith mage was quickly wrapping his arms around her and pulling her into a hug. Her cheek was pressed against his chest and his chin was resting on the top of her head, and his arms around her only had his cloak surrounding her and making it far too tempting to properly bury her head against him.

She couldn't do that though. Instead, she only mumbled, "What are you doing?"

"Giving you a hug," Bickslow answered. "You looked like you needed one, and I give really great hugs so just deal with it."

_Iâ€¦ Kinda really do need a hug right now. _"I suppose I do," Lucy sniffled, and she hesitantly wound her arms around his waist and tried not to think too much about how Bickslow really did give great hugs. She couldn't, though. It was really too nice and Lucy could probably stay there and really end up in tears, but she didn't want to do that. "And how are you so good at this?"

He chuckled quietly as he kept his hands slowly moving up and down her back. "What? Hugging?"

"Yeah."

"'Cause I'm tall as shit and I'm permanently cold so I'm always wearing really warm clothes. Makes me super warm and cuddly."

Lucy let out a watery laugh. She wasn't even going to question why Bickslow was permanently cold, just because it strangely explained his choice of attire ninety-nine percent of the time. But his height though? She had to give that one to him. He was just as tall as Laxus, but he wasâ€¦ Softer. And much nicer to hug. "Well, you're definitely tall," she laughed.

"And you're short as fuck," Bickslow chuckled. "But you're the perfect height for me to do this, so I'm not complaining."

"I'm not that short, thank you very much. And you really do just happen to be exceptionally tall, so shush."

"You are. There's one upside to being so tall, though, but I guess it would be a bit of a downside to you."

Lucy lifted her head slightly just to look up and find the mischievous smirk on his mouth. It was only then that she realised she'd already stopped crying. He'd distracted her for just a short moment from the horrible, horrible news she didn't think she'd _ever_ receive, and whether or not that was what Bickslow had intended to do, Lucy was glad. He'd made her smile when all she wanted to do was curl up in a ball and sleep and cry and not talk to anyone â€" most definitely not Laxus, anyway â€" and she was glad.

"And what's that?"

A grin spread over his lips as he looked down to the blonde. "I just happen to be at a perfect height to look down your shirt most of the time." Lucy rolled her eyes and couldn't help but glance down to make sure he wasn't able to, but thanks to the winter weather, her much more modest clothing choices made that impossible for him. But then Bickslow tensed, and he paled beneath his visor. "Shit, don't tell Laxus I said that."

Lucy laughed again quietly. "Trust me, I don't have any intentions of doing that," she mumbled. And it wasn't just because of what Bickslow had said. No, that was like how Bickslow usually was around her, if anything, and Lucy had almost thought she wasn't going to hear one slightly perverted thing from him ever again.

It was because Lucy just wasn't exactly _talking_ to Laxus. She'd known right from the moment she'd decided to go on that date after they'd slept together that things wouldn't work. It was doomed to fail, but that was really okay. It was just that she'd started enjoying things. It wasâ€¦ Well, it was fun, considering they'd really just reached the point where they were sleeping together and doing nothing else. They talked about random things, sure, and there'd been a few times where they just sat up in her apartment drinking and watching stupid movies, but that was it. Lucy knew she didn't feel the same way about him as she had at the start of the month, and she honestly doubted that Laxus did too. They'd seemingly moved into a kind of friends-with-benefits type of relationship, even though they were technically still dating. It was just that neither

of them were quite ready to call it off and call things what they were.

And all of that was fine.

But it was precisely why Lucy wasn't going to tell Laxus aboutâ€¦ Well, anything. Not about what Bickslow had said, not about even talking to him, just because Lucy had a very strong suspicion that the two of them being more than a little distant over the last few weeks was because of her, and she was most definitely not going to tell Laxus about her appointment with her doctor that morning. He hadn't known she was even going to see a doctor in the first place, so it was really none of his business. The only one who needed to know that she wasn't able to have children was her future partner, and considering she highly doubted that she'd already met that person yet, no one else needed to know.

Not Laxus, and most certainly not Bickslow. It was her problem to deal with alone for the time being. And what Lucy needed from Bickslow right then was his secrecy. She looked up to him again and she nervously worried her bottom lip between her teeth. "Can youâ€¦ Can you please not tell Laxus about this though?" Lucy whispered. "He doesn't need to know about me, and Iâ€¦ I don't want him to."

It wasn't like Bickslow planned to do so, but he couldn't help but wonder just what it was that was going on with Lucy that had her in tears yet not wanting her boyfriend to know about any of it. "Sure thing."

She smiled. "Thanks, Bix." She'd been about to look back down to bury her head against his chest again when she told herself not to. She didn't need to worry him or take up any more of his time. Lucy only straightened up and pulled herself away from the Seith mage, and he crossed his arms over his chest. "I uhâ€¦ I should go," she mumbled. "I justâ€¦ Yeah, I think I just want to go home. Thanks for the hug, I suppose."

"Any time, Lucy." Aside from the fact that she really was the perfect height for him to hug, he liked hugs. And cuddling, when it came to certain people. Just not after sex, that shit was weird.

He'd been about to just let her head on her way home to do whatever it was she wanted or needed to do right then, but he decided not to. Bickslow knew she didn't want to talk about whatever it was that was going on, and he could respect that, but as much as she had looked like she'd needed a hug, Bickslow felt like she needed a bit more company. Or maybe it was because he wanted the company from someone other than Laxus for a little while, but Bickslow didn't really care what the case was.

All he did was quickly step back out into the street from the quiet alley and catch back up to the blonde. He gave her a warm smile when she looked up to him expectantly, and he said, "Come on, I'll walk you home."

* * *

><p>It was the day before Valentine's Day when Laxus had finally come to accept that things with the blonde just weren't working out. He'd become increasingly aware of it over the last two weeks, but it

wasn't something he'd been wanting to actually accept.<p>

She was hot as hell and great in bed and surprisingly fun to be around. Except in the last two weeks, things had just gotten progressively worse. She'd beenâ€¦ Distant. And Laxus had tried to cheer her up and make her laugh, just because she was more fun to be around when she was happy, but it hadn't worked. She just hadn't been the same for some reason.

But that wasn't the only issue. There was still the fact that he didn't really like her anymore. As a friend, hell yes. But as a girlfriend? Not exactly. They just didn't work in that kind of capacity anymore, and Laxus had a feeling that Lucy knew it, too, and it was probably part of why the last two weeks had been so awkward. The sex was still great, of course, but that was really all there was to it, apart from a bit of cuddling and awkward movie-watching and silent dinners.

As much as Laxus wanted to keep things going because she was still a great person and he enjoyed having her in his life as a friend, he knew they couldn't. They needed to break up because the longer they kept doing what they were doing, the worse things would become. And, even though Laxus knew that breaking up was inevitable, he didn't want to be the one to get dumped. No. He had to be the one to call things off. He couldn't let Lucy dump him.

Turning to the blonde beside him who was panting just as much as he was and covered in a thin layer of sweat, he said, "We gotta talk."

"I know," she sighed. In truth though, Lucy had only been putting off that conversation for as long as she could. She'd known since the beginning it wouldn't work out with Laxus, but still, she'd been trying to avoid breaking up with him, just in case he did still have feelings for her.

Of course, though, if he was the one that was bringing it up (because she knew exactly what it was he meant), then it obviously meant he didn't still like her in a romantic way, and that was perfect for Lucy.

On the other hand, though, she couldn't believe he was breaking up with her right after sex (and, of course, it had just been another occasion where she hadn't been bothered about getting herself off and had just let him believe that he was a sex god. She was getting very good at faking orgasms, thanks to Laxus), and on the day before Valentine's Day.

"I think we should uhâ€¦"

Lucy turned to look to him then and quickly blurted out, "I'm in love with you."

Laxus sat up so quickly the room spun. "Youâ€¦ What?!" That was not how it was supposed to go. They were supposed to be breaking up, damn it! But then Lucy started giggling and he felt his heart return to where it was supposed to be in his chest.

"God, you should see your face right now," she laughed, and Laxus only continued to scowl at her after realising that she was having

one last go at teasing him. "I'm kidding, you jackass. I think we should stop seeing each other like this, too."

"Youâ€¦ Do?"

"Well, yeah. We don't work together."

"Huh."

Lucy's brow furrowed. "Wait, that's what you were going to say, right?" she asked. "That we should break up?"

"Yeah," Laxus mumbled as he fell back down to the bed beside the blonde. "I justâ€¦ Didn't expect it to go this well? I think this might be the easiest break up I've ever had. Shit." It was just so simple. It was both what they wanted, and that was that. No one was hurt and no one was in tears. It wasâ€¦ Well, it was really fucking great. He could deal with a mutual breakup. "So that's it then?"

Lucy shrugged a shoulder. "I think so."

"Soâ€¦ We still good though? I meanâ€¦ You're still great. I just don't wanna date you anymore."

"I don't see any reason why we wouldn't be," she responded thoughtfully, sitting up on an elbow and not caring in the slightest that she was still naked. "Not unless you decide to be weird about it, anyway." Lucy just couldn't see why they wouldn't be good. She thought they were ending on pretty good terms, so unless Laxus decided that them breaking up translated to giving each other the cold shoulder the rest of eternity, then there was just no reason for things to be anything other than good.

The Slayer huffed and muttered under his breath, "I ain't gonna be weird 'bout it."

"Then that's it then," Lucy laughed. _That was painless._ "But you know that means we can't sleep together anymore, right?"

"I figured as much." That was really the only downside to breaking up. Sure, they'd kind of turned their relationship into a friends-with-benefits type thing, but it would be weird if they continued that.

She fell back and stared up at the ceiling for another moment before her lips curled up into a smirk, and she glanced back to the blond next to her. "You know you're supposed to be leaving now so I can go cry and get drunk," she said.

"Are you actually?"

"Doubtful. I'll probably get drunk and laugh, but I won't cry."

"Ouch, Blondieâ€¦"

She laughed again as she sat up then began to try pushing the Dragon Slayer out of her bed. She failed dismally, of course. She couldn't even make him move an inch. "Come on, leave already," Lucy giggled.

Lexus couldn't help but chuckle along with her as she continued to try moving him.

"Do I have to? I'm not even gonna get any break up sex out of this?" he questioned, and his own lips curled into a vicious smirk as Lucy sat up on her knees and pursed her lips.

Well, it wasn't like it would be the worst idea. They weren't getting back together, that much was obvious, so it really would be just sex. Sure, it wasn't spectacular, but Lucy just didn't really care. Oh, what the hell. Rolling her eyes, she swung her leg over the Slayer's hips and pulled herself up onto his lap. She wasn't even surprised that he was hard again, because she'd most definitely come to learn that the guy had one hell of a sex drive, and apparently the shortest refractory period in the entire world. It wasn't even something Lucy had liked, but right then, she just didn't even care enough. "I'm not doing all the work this time though, got it?"

She didn't have time to say or do anything else before he was pushing her off of him and turning her around with his fingers biting almost painfully into her hips, and he was lining himself up at her entrance before leaning over her to murmur in her ear, "Fine by me, Blondie."

* * *

><p>Bickslow eventually and finally made it out of bed at some point in the afternoon on Valentine's Day. His previous night's entertainment, someone by the name of Mason, had been annoyingly horny and affectionate and had refused to leave until morning. And being more hungover than he usually was, Bickslow had only wanted to sleep for the rest of the day and enjoy his peace and quiet.<p>

He hadn't seen Lexus since the previous day, and by the time Bickslow was up and functioning that afternoon, both Freed and Lexus were gone. That worked out incredibly well for Bickslow, too. His best friend had a girlfriend, so he was no doubt out doing romantic shit with her, and Bickslow didn't even want to hear about any of that. Bickslow's plans for that evening were the same as every other year: go to guild, tease someone, then go get drunk and find himself a threesome.

When he got to the guild that day, Bickslow made a beeline straight for the bar. Mira was there, as usual, and Freed was with Lexus so Bickslow could tease Mira about Freed.

Wait! Hang on.

He looked over his shoulder to where Lexus was sitting with Freed, and then to where Lucy was sitting down one end of the bar with a magazine in front of her. It was Valentine's Day, and Lucy and Lexus weren't even sitting together. How curious. Bickslow chose not to say anything just yet, though. Instead, he just went up to Mira and leant on the edge of the bar.

The barmaid smiled at him as she placed a clean mug down on the bar. "Happy Valentine's Day, Bickslow," she beamed.

"Uh-huh, you too," he mumbled. "Any plans with Freed tonight?"

"He's coming over for dinner, actually," Mira replied.

"Oh? That sounds awfully like a date, Mirajane. You and Freed finally decide to just fuck each other and call it what it is?"

The Take-Over mage's face flushed and she looked down to the rag she held in her hands. "Iâ€¦ N-No, weâ€¦" She huffed in annoyance, and when she looked back up again to the grinning Seith mage, she looked normal again. "It's just dinner," she explained, and then something that only made Bickslow's skin crawl flashed in her eyes. He hated that look. "Ever will be there, too. You could come over as well. I'm sure Lisanna would appreciate the company and not feel so left out if you were there."

Bickslow raised an eyebrow beneath his visor. "Miraâ€¦ Are you trying to set me up with your sister?"

"Well, do you have anything better to do?"

"I have plans, actually."

"With whom?"

"Hopefully two sexy as hell redheads," Bickslow answered, and Mira sighed and shook her head. It was the usual response to Bickslow's far too honest answers.

"Bickslow, aren't you getting a bit old for that kind ofâ€¦ Lifestyle?" Mira asked.

Too old? Hell no. He'd only recently turned twenty-three, thank you very much. He wasn't even close to being too old for that kind of lifestyle, as Mira had put it. Bickslow shrugged and replied, "Nah. Not even close. Why do you even care?"

"Because I'm sure you'd be happier if you had someone in your life that you cared about."

"And that's why you're suddenly trying to set me up with Lisanna. On Valentine's Day. Because you think I'd be happier with an actual girlfriend. Right," the Seith mage muttered. He was perfectly happy without a girlfriend. Or boyfriend, for that matter. He didn't need a relationship to be happy. Sighing, Bickslow straightened up. "Well, I'm gonna pass on that. She's a kid. No thanks."

Mira glared at the Seith mage as she placed another glass down on the bar. "She's nearly twenty," she responded.

"Still not interested. Have fun with your not boyfriend." He could practically feel her stare burning through the back of his skull as he turned away from her just to head down to where a certain blonde was sitting down the other end. He didn't dare look back to Mira, though. He'd basically just insulted her baby sister (not that it was intentional, surprisingly), after all. No, Bickslow was smart enough to know not to go near her for the rest of the day, which really did work perfectly.

His Valentine's Day routine was going as it always did. He'd teased someone, sort of, but instead of heading to the first of many bars and clubs for the night, he had something else to sort out first,

because his curiosity was getting the better of him.

Leaning down on the bar next to Lucy, he glanced back over to where Laxus was sitting with Freed, and suppressed a shiver when he noticed him glaring at him. _I get it, man. She's your girlfriend and she's off-limits now and forever. Chill._ "So, Cosplayer," he said, and Lucy looked up to him from the corner of her eyes as he continued. "Why are you over here and Lightning Rod over there?"

"Because we broke up," Lucy answered, and she flicked the page in her magazine.

_Huh? _"Youâ€¦ You did?"

"Mm-hmm. Last night."

"Oh." _Thank fucking god that shit is over._ "I'mâ€¦ I'm sorry," he mumbled. _No I'm not._

Lucy shrugged. "It's fine. It just wasn't working between us so breaking up was the logical thing to do."

_Fucking __**called**__ it. _Of course they didn't work, and Bickslow was so, _so_ glad that they were over. He couldn't exactly let that show though, especially not when Lucy looked surprisingly upset. "You don't exactly look fine," he said softly. "Are you sad about it?"

She looked up again and pursed her lips. She wasn't exactly upset, but she also was at the same time. It wasn't like Lucy missed Laxus, because she was glad they'd broken up. It was just that it was Valentine's Day and she was officially single yet again. It just would've been nice to be able to share her day with someone else. Gray and Erza had snuck off somewhere, Natsu was nowhere to be found, Cana had already left to go drinking with Bacchus in Hargeon, she had absolutely no idea where Levy was, and Laxus wasâ€¦ Well, Laxus was her ex and even if they had ended on good terms, spending the day together just as _friends_ would be weird, even though that was what they were better off as.

Lucy didn't think she needed to bother Bickslow with her issues again. _He probably has somewhere to be, anyway._ "I guess," she admitted, sighing and closing her magazine. "But it's honestly silly. I'm fine."

Bickslow glanced back over to where Laxus was, and absentmindedly drummed his fingers on the counter. He still knew the guy was watching him and waiting to be given a reason to beat him up (and Bickslow was cursing the existence of a bro code), but Bickslow strangely didn't care. Bickslow was smart enough to know that he wasn't ever going to be able to do anything with Lucy, just because of Laxus, which was just a little frustrating if he thought about it (even though he knew he had no hope in hell of ever getting with her in any kind of capacity, even if he did want to), but he could sure as hell talk to her. And if Laxus tried to tell him that he wasn't even going to be able to do that unless he acted like a somewhat respectable human being, then the Dragon Slayer was probably going to get called a cunt again and told to go fuck himself, just because Lucy obviously wasn't going to do that anymore (if they'd even sleeping together in the first place, which he strangely couldn't

help but be curious about).

Talking to her, he could do. He could even go back to hitting on her and telling her his horribly twisted and dirty jokes, and that he'd honestly missed. And right then, all Bickslow wanted to do was talk to her. Call it making up for the last month and a half, because he really did have a lot of pick-up lines he'd been dying to use on her, just because he could, but he really did just want to talk to her.

He looked back to the blonde next to him and stopped drumming on the counter. "Do you wanna go get drunk on a rooftop?" he asked quickly, and he didn't care in the slightest that Laxus had probably heard him ask. The fact it was Valentine's Day was irrelevant to him and his usual plans for the rest of the evening would gladly be cancelled for Lucy. He just wanted to cheer her up and make her roll her eyes at him, because he'd missed that.

And looking up after a moment, Lucy found herself smiling for the first time that day. "You know what? I think I do."

* * *

><p>When I set out to write this, I wanted it to be more LaLu, but since it is a prequel, I really wanted a lot more of the entire BixLu friendship, so that was why it went that way. Also, it doesn't help I've never written a LaLu story, and I can't write Laxus to save my life. So excuse the awkwardness. In my head it kinda worked, but not really. Oh well. The point is that I got to a point where I was happy enough with this story to actually post it (and I've been sitting on this one for a long time). _

_So awkward Laxus, jealous Bix (my poor baby), and then poor Lucy. Yeah... Uh-huh, I went there. Oh god. For my HIMY readers, you don't even know... Yup, just sitting here and spoiling my own stories a little. _

_Anyway! I do hope you enjoyed this. If not, then... Welp. I tried. I don't think I'll be venturing into the land of writing a LaLu for a while, though there is one (or maybe it's two, I can't remember) on my list of chapter stories to eventually do. (And you just know that it has to have Bix, Gajeel, and Cobra in it too, because they're my cuddly babies and I can't do anything without them.) _

Until next time though!

- April

End
file.